

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 has been cancelled. Claim 15 has been amended to depend from claim 1.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Official Action indicated that claims 3-8, 10-12 and 14-16 were directed to allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 and 9 were rejected as obvious over HIGHTOWER et al. 4,010,619 in view of BUFFMAN et al. 5,752,460.

HIGHTOWER describes a system comprising a lift module 20 equipped with active means 204 and 205, hydraulic thrusters used to control the underwater position of the module (column 4, lines 65-68).

BUFFMAN describes a system with passive means 134 for holding the system on a fixed course, and means 136 to stabilize the system in terms of attitude (column 2, lines 32-37).

It is clear that the passive stabilizing means used by BUFFMAN are unable to control the underwater position of the module described by HIGHTOWER. Therefore, it is not possible to combine the two documents in order to obtain a system according to claim 1 of the present invention in order to obtain a workable system.

With regard to claim 9, no cited document describes an element which is associated with the reel and which allows the

play between the reel and the landing mechanism to be compensated. Moreover, in HIGHTOWER, one can identify two launching mechanisms. One launching mechanism is a crane and there is no reason to have means to compensate a play. The other launching mechanism is associated with the lift module 20 and the submarine work vehicle 30. This launching mechanism is not described and there is no reason to provide means to compensate a play.

Thus, the obviousness rejection is not believed to be viable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are solicited.

In view of the above, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

Should there remain any outstanding issues, it is requested that the undersigned attorney be telephoned and afforded an opportunity to discuss any necessary amendment to place the case in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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